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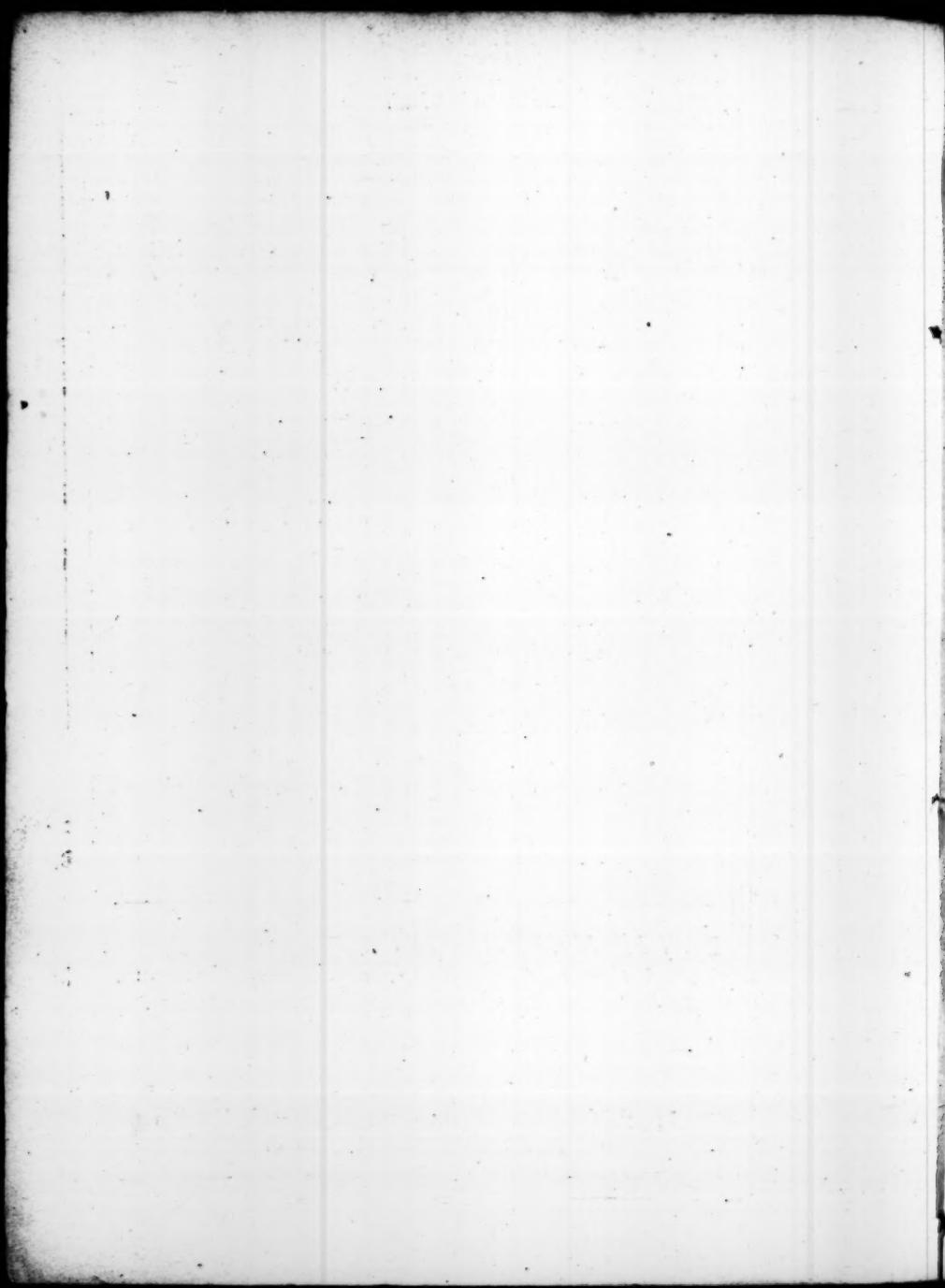
A
S E R M O N
Preached at a Meeting
OF THE
Natives and Inhabitants
Of the COUNTY of
W A R W I C K
And CITY of
C O V E N T R Y.

In St. *Mary le Bow*,

Novemb. 24. 1687.

By *THOMAS WAGSTAFFE*, Chancellor of
the Cathedral Church of *Litchfield*, and Rector of
St. Margaret's Parsons and *St. Gabriel Fanchurch, London*.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Walter Kettily*, at the Bishop's Head in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1688.



T O

Mr. { John Hobbins, Bartholomew Muston,
 Robert Limpney, John Berriman,
 William Hudson, John Iles,
 Ben. Woolner, Ralph Parker,
 John Goodall, Danvers Washington,

Stewards of the *Warwickshire-Feast.*

GENTLEMEN,

IT is from Your repeated Requests, that the following Discourse becomes Publick, which is the true and only Apologie I have for letting it go abroad, when there are so many far more excellent, which daily appear from the Press. I know the Truths spoken of are seasonable enough; but whether I have handled them as I ought to do, the World must now judge: To whom I leave it, with my hearty Prayers, That

(what influence soever this poor Discourse
may have) the Virtues may grow up a-
mongst men, That Unity and Charity which
adorn and secure our Religion, may flour-
ish more than Passion, Prejudice, or
Self-love, which disgrace and hazard it.
I have no more to add, but my hearty
Acknowledgments for the Civilities re-
ceived by,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Humble Servant,

Tho. Wagstaffe.

1 Ep. of S. P & T. ch. iii. v. 8.

— *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion
one of another, —*

WHEN Brethren are solemnly met together, a Discourse of Unity and Charity will not be unseasonable ; These are the laudable ends of such pious Festivals ; and these ends they have a great aptitude to procure and promote. They are nurseries of Amity and Friendship, and they make and maintain peace and love among Brethren ; Envy, Hatred, Malice and Uncharitableness are strangers here, contrary to the nature of it, and cannot be admitted without violence and hypocrisy. Almighty God upbraids the *Jews*, that they *Fasted* hypocritically, and perverted the end of their *Fasts*, when they *Fasted* for strife and debate ; and 'tis yet more unreasonable and hypocritical to *Feast* for them. This is to wound with Plasters, to kill with Remedies. Every thing

thing the more Festival it is, the more it heals and unites; the Fruits of it are Joy, Peace and Love, and it either finds or makes men Friends. And this is a principal concern in the Institution of all *Feasts*, whether Heathen, Jewish or Christian; to Secure their Friendships, to Reconcile their Differences, to Commemorate their Founders, and to Unite their Disciples and Followers. And even that Spiritual Feast appointed by our Blessed Lord and Saviour, the Sacrament of his Body and Blood hath the same tendency; our coming together to That Table minds us that We are all one in Christ; That as we there Celebrate the highest love to us, so we are obliged to practice it our selves, and be like minded to our Brethren, as God and Christ have been to us, merciful and kind and compassionate: And the whole purpose of that Feast is, as to joyn us to Christ, so also to unite us to one another. And for the further promoting and carrying on these effects, the Apostles and Primitive Christians after This, had another Feast of Love, where they eat together with wonderful content, where all Brotherly Offices passed betwixt them, and where was all the sweetness and satisfaction that could be in the best Society. *S. Luke* saith, *they did eat*

eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart.
i. e. with a very great delight in, and sincere
affection towards one another.

And this is, or ought to be the Temper and Constitution of all Christian *Feasts*, especially of such as were originally appointed, and yet continued for these very purposes. I conceive therefore, it will not be unsuitable to enforce the necessity of practising these Duties, especially if we consider, as well their general nature and influence, as the particular occasion. They very well suit with This, but they are not appropriate to it ; these Graces may have from hence their employment, but not their Sanction : the obligation to Unity and Charity is not founded in our Tables, but they may be there and ought to be exercised ; when Brethren are met together, 'tis a fit season to apply them : But the obligations are perpetual, and we stand bound to observe them as we are Men, as Christians, and as Country-men ; and whatsoever there is in us of true Humanity, Religion, or Neighbourhood, They all engage us to be of one mind, and to have compassion one of another.

In Discoursing of which words I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what Unity is.

B

II. To

II. To represent the advantages of it.
 III. To shew the Relation that is between Unity and Charity ; how fitly the latter part of the Text follows the former.

IV. To pursue the Apostle's exhortation ; by laying down some things to engage us to the Love and Practice of Unity and Charity.
Be ye all of one mind, &c.

I. To shew what Unity is : But before I do this, that I may not seem to have undertaken a very idle and impertinent Task, it will be needful to premise and suppose these Two things.

1. That the attainment of Unity is possible.
2. That to endeavour it is necessary.

1. That 'tis possible, 'tis in vain to perswade men to impossibilities ; and you may as well invite all men to be of the same Complexion, and of the same Stature, as of the same Mind. But does not this equally argue the vanity of S. Peter's exhortation ? In the Apostles times, there were variety of Humours and Interests, diversities of Temper and Education, as well as in Ours. In those days as well as ours, there were differing Parties and Perswasions. But did not the Apostles for all that, and the more for that, perswade them with all earnestness to Peace and Unity ? And to say

we must not speak of Unity, because there are inveterate Dissentions ; is as much as to say, that we must not mention the Remedy, because men are affected with the Disease. And there is yet more reason here ; for these things are for the most part voluntary, and in our power. Men may lay aside their prejudices and corrupt Interests. They may, if they will, bury their Differences, and forget their Animosities : But if we will not, the fault is not in the nature of the thing, but in our selves.

2. Tis necessary : by this I mean what the Schools call *Necessitas præcepti*, it hath a Divine Sanction, and is part of the Law of God, which contains the terms of our Salvation, and which we are bound to observe upon peril of God's displeasure. Now as S. James argues, *He that said, Do not commit Adultery, v. 11.* ^{Chap. 2.} *said also, Do not kill.* The same Law that says, Do not Kill, nor Steal, says also, Live at Unity. And if we think our selves oblig'd, by vertue of this Law, not to invade the Bloud, or the Possessions of our Neighbour, by the same sure (having the very same Authority) we should think our selves oblig'd to live at Peace and Unity with him. The Conscience is equally bound by all the Laws of

God ; and Love, Peace and Unity are as often, and as earnestly enjoyn'd as any other duties ; our Saviour himself strictly commands it, and his Apostles press it with all imaginable zeal and vehemency. And except there can be some method of Interpretation found out, that shall make these plain words of our Saviour, and of his Apostles to signify nothing, or to signify the quite contrary ; I cannot see how any good man can any more allow himself in the known breach of *This*, than of any other command in the whole Gospel. I know 'tis here said, We cannot come up to all the terms of Union, but I say we may Unite as far as we can ; and if we do not do that, we do as plainly violate this Law, as Thieves do the Law against Stealing, or Murderers that against Killing : And if that be but honestly done, there would not be much complaint of Divisions, to be sure none of Uncharitableness.

These things premised, I come,

1. To shew what Unity is ; and here I shall not enter into particulars, or consider the differing kinds of Unity ; but only lay down a general description, and such as may agree with all the species or branches of it. In the general then *Unity is an agreement amongst*

men

men in things lawful, whereby they joynly take care off, and promote the common Interest. In this Description of Unity there are three parts considerable. 1. 'Tis a mutual Agreement. 2. 'Tis a mutual care of the Common Interest. And 3. The terms of the Union, and the means of That care are to be Lawful.

1. 'Tis a mutual Agreement; this needs no Explication.

2. 'Tis a mutual care of the Common Interest. Men may never quarrel, and yet may never be Friends. A man may think the same thing with his Brethren, and yet not be United. If there be never so much agreement in Opinion and Judgment, yet if the Interests are disserv'd, 'tis not Unity. This I take to be the meaning of those words of our Saviour, *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* At the Siege of a City, one of the Citizens, though he doth not kill his Fellow-Citizens, yet sure he is not much at Unity with them, if he is undermining the Walls, or opening the Gates, or giving intelligence to the Enemy.

3. The terms of Union, and all the means of it are to be Lawful, without which 'tis not

Mark.
12.30.

*Justinian. in c.
4. Ephes.* not Unity but Confederacy and Conspiracy. S. *Chrysostom* says therefore, that 'tis a mutual conjunction between themselves and with God; if God and his Truth be left out, 'tis a Covenant of Iniquity, and the Unity of Thieves and Robbers; nothing but what is every way lawful can constitute a just Unity; when therefore I exhort you to it, I do not exhort you to an *Association*, to a *Solemn League and Covenant*, or to a *Guisian League*, but to a Christian unity; to such a Unity only, as is in every thing agreeable to true *Religion*, to *Loyalty*, and to the *Laws of the Land*.

II. I shall indeavour to represent the Advantages of Unity; which are so many and so important, that I am very sensible, the best I can say will be insufficient, and come far short of their true character: but there are two things that will make amends for the defects of representation.

The first is, Things that are excellent commend themselves; their own beauty and goodness set them off better than all the Artificial methods in the world. Those are poor Vertues that must have Art and Language for their Harbingers to gain them admittance, and provide them lodging; Unity hath a native splendor, and is best seen by its own

own light, its own worth and usefulness are the best Credentials, and will better recommend it, than any forms or ornaments of Speech.

The Second is, That as 'tis excellent, so the Benefits of it are plain and obvious. They do not ly so deep, as to need Art, Learning or Subtilty to discover. The benefits of Unity are no mysteries of State, but every man (howsoever he practises) cannot chuse but see them; and they are as visible and apparent as any thing in humane Life.

And from these Two, the excellency of Unity, and the obviousness of its Benefits will the Defects of what follows be supplied; and there will be les need of Accuracy and Punctualness in describing the Advantages of it; which I shall therefore briefly do in these following particulars :

1. 'Tis the safety of all Societies; and this is so very evident, that it needs not, it cannot be prov'd, 'tis so plain of it self, that nothing can be plainer said to make it appear more than it does: what need a man, or what arguments can a man have to prove that the Sun shines; and this is as apparent: All therefore that can be said, is not any direct proof (for 'tis above that) but only to shew

shew it in examples, or illustrate it by similitudes. And from the beginning of all Societies to this very day, the chief instruments (for the most part) of their Ruine have been their own Intestine Divisions: Either some of their Members have been Treacherous and betrayed them for Money, or there has been Envy among them at the greatness of their Brethren, or there has been strong Factions, and powerful Divisions. And these have done them more harm, than all outward force, and have been the main and principal occasions of their downfal. Twill be needless to mention particulars, all Ages, and all Histories are full of them ; and all experience proves, that these Intestine mischiefs in Aggregate Bodies, are like inward Diseases in the Natural, which prey upon the vital spirits, and drie up the very springs of Life. A man that is wounded, or bruised, or outwardly hurt, yet if his Vitals be sound, the strength of his Constitution will repair it ; but if it be in his Brain, or in his Heart, the Prognostick is fatal, and the Physician concludes his Patient not long liv'd. I do not say that every division is Mortal, and that a Kingdom cannot survive it ; but every one is a step towards it, and there is always danger and jeopardy at the bottom.

bottom. The Waters may be troubled to catch the Fish, but never to preserve them.

2. Unity best serves the purposes of Religion. There are two ends of Religion ; The Honour of God, and the Salvation of Man. Now God is honoured, when He is own'd and worship'd ; when His name is published, His goodness declared ; And This sure is best done, when 'tis joynly by all those that believe on him, as a King is most honoured by the unanimous acclamations of his People. But God is likewise honoured, when by the good behaviour of them that own it, his Name and his Truth are well spoken of, and when the good and interests of his Religion are promoted. And I need not say that *Discord* and *Dissentions* destroy the Beauty and Charity of Religion, that thereby God is dishonoured, and his Religion reproached and blasphemed. That likewise, when men are for siding, there are other ends to be looked after besides, and often-times more than God's Honour, and the care of Truth ; *Passions* and *Humours* are to be satisfied, *By-designs* to be minded, and the common Interests of Religion must be dis-served for those of a *Party*. These are so plain, that they need not any longer be in-

fisted on. The other end of Religion is Man's Salvation ; for the promoting of which our Saviour hath not only discovered, and laid down the Doctrine of Salvation, but appointed also several ministerial helps and assistances. I shall instance only in such as are not controverted, and have not been doubted by any Christians of what Denomination soever ; And those are Instruction, good Example, Fraternal Correption and Admonition : These all men own to be Christian duties, and proper and excellent means of Edification ; And indeed so they are where Brethren are at Unity, but without it they are useless and insignificant. Let a man speak the plainest and most seasonable Truths ; let him bring the strongest evidence of Reason ; yet if they do not go with our bias, we will not understand them. Let a man live to the honour of God, and be a publick example of all Virtue, a light shining in a dark place, yet if he is not on our side, the Reputation of his example is lost ; and though he is our next Neighbour, he will influence us no more than the Antipodes. Let a man touch our Sores with all the tenderness imaginable ; let him reprove and admonish with all Christian meekness ; yet if these are called Satyrs and Invectives,

Invectives, or if they are entertained with rancor or prejudice, what good can they do? And these are too plainly the effects of our Divisions, which evacuate the wholsom methods of our Safety. To preserve us upright and in the Truth, is not so easie, but we stand in need of all brotherly assistances; And it cannot be denied, but Dissentions deprive us of them, and obstruct the great end of all Christian Societies, which is the mutual edification one of another.

3. 'Tis the Perfection of all Political Virtues, and for the most part of the Christian Virtues also. 'Twas *This* that first brought men together, and joyned them in Bodies and Societies; so that whatever advantages have thereby accrued to mankind, they are all owing to *This*, as to their first Parent; Good Government, Wholsom Laws, Mutual Security and Preservation, Arts and Sciences, Trade and Commerce: They are all the Children of Union, first brought forth by Her; and They still hang on her Breasts, and must receive their nourishment, and their growth from her. Wise men may counsel and direct, men of Learning may study, men of Trade may get wealth, men of Power may subdue, but it's all by virtue of *Unity*, which

gives life, and vigor, and strength to all Political motions. This is the Cement of the World, which joyns its parts. By *This* a Kingdom is compacted, a City made regular, a Family orderly, and all quiet, peaceable, and safe. So that whatever flourishing there is of Kingdoms, whatever improvement of Arts or Trade, whatever Prosperity there is in Cities or private Men, whatever power or skill to get or keep an Estate, whatever security from violence, injury, or wrong, They and a thousand more are all derived to us from this single Virtue.

These goodly Fruits and Blessings we see with our Eyes, we hear with our Ears, and we handle with our Hands ; They are near us, they are within us, they are all about us ; They are in the Country, in the City, in our Shops, and in our Hous-es. And there is no State or Condition of men which does not feel the Influence and Benefits of it. And would to God the Practice were as universal as the Benefit ; that the Advantage would work upon our Affections, and we would be brought heartily to love that we receive so much good by.

And as Unity is the Perfection of Political, so it is for the most part of Christian Virtues also.

also. The Apostle tells us that Love is the fulfilling of the Law. And Love is either another name for Unity, or Unity is the Perfection of it. And *This* where 'tis firmly seated in the Heart, 'tis either it self, or in the effects and consequences, it naturally and necessarily produces a Fulfilling of the whole Law of God. It is not indeed an immediate Act of Divine Worship; but 'tis such an Ingredient in it, that without it, the zealousest performance will not be acceptable: *Go and Mat. 5. be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy 24. gift.* This must fan even our most holy Flames, and the ardent breathings of our Souls after God, will not be accepted, if we have not the same also after our Brethren. We are taught therefore in the best Prayer that ever was, to say, *Our Father*; the Father of us all, in the stile and language of our Saviour, which our Hearts should always agree with; our Acknowledgments and Invocations, and the Blessings we Pray for too, are in common; *Give us, forgive us, lead us not, &c. U.S.* *i. e.* our selves and all our Brethren. So great a share has Unity even in our immediate acts of Devotion: We cannot worship, acknowledge, petition God without it; so that although it is not the Perfection of our Prayers and

and Worship, yet it perfects them, it compleats them, without which they would be mutilate and imperfect, and want a necessary part.

And then for these other Christian Virtues, Peace, Humility, Forgiveness, Patience, Contentment, Charity, These do all as naturally flow from Unity, as a stream does from its fountain. A man that is heartily united, he cannot contemn his Brother, cannot be implacable, cannot see his Brother in misery, cannot be unsatisfied with his station, cannot be wanting in all the just respects and duties he owes to all his Relations: and a man may as well imagine, that the foot should spurn at the head, that the hands should be cruel and harsh towards one another; as that a Man heartily owning himself a Member of a Body, should be wanting in all just offices that may tend to the support or convenience of that Body: and this seems to be the meaning of the word *finally, finally be ye all of one mind.* The Apostle before had exhorted them to discharge honestly several Duties of Relation, as Subjects to their Governors, Servants to their Masters, Wives to their Husbands, and Husbands to their Wives; he then adds, *finally be ye all of one mind,*

mind, i. e. This is the sum of the whole matter, 'tis needless to reckon up every particular duty; get but this comprehensive one well, and that will dispose you to perform all the rest. Be but all of one mind, and then you will honour *all men*, *you will love the brotherhood*, ^{ch. 2. v.} *you will fear God*, *you will honour the King*; you ¹⁷ will be dutiful, just, honest, kind and compassionate, and you will perform what you ought to do to all your Relations. And this brings me to the Third thing.

III. To shew the Relation that is between Unity and Charity, how fitly and naturally the latter part of the Text follows the former: Unity hath a numerous off-spring, but Charity is the first-born; whereever 'tis settled, its fruitfulness appears in all good things, but in nothing more than in producing this great and illustrious Virtue. The progress therefore of the Apostle's exhortation is exceeding easie and natural, *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another.* Having Compassion, how! but as ye are all of one mind. This is the way to *have* it, and to *have* it in such a degree and manner, as may render it (what it is in it self) a most comfortable and beneficial Virtue to our Brethren. When men are divided, they *have* envy and hatred,

hatred, they *have* anger and spight; and if they *have* Compassion, 'tis generally either streight or clogg'd, narrow in its extent, or encumbred with grudgings and contempt, and for the most part, 'tis either a low spirited, or a scornful pity. But in Unity the current is open, and there is nothing to obstruct or muddy the stream, when men sincerely consider they are all one; that they are in truth Members one of another, then their Charity is bright and generous, hath no mean nor sordid alloyes; their tenderness comes from their very Hearts and Souls, and they are kind to their Brethren as to their own flesh.

I cannot express this better than in S. *Augustine's* similitude (if he be the Author of those Homilies) If there be a thorn in the foot, the back bends, the eyes search, the hands are ready, and all parts are quick and active to relieve the member that is grieved. And this is the just resemblance of that Charity that arises from Unity. The whole Bdy feels the smart and needs of a suffering Member, it touches them to the quick, and they are as earnest and hasty to succour and cherish it, as they would be in their own wants and afflictions. In the first times therefore, when Unity was warm, Charity was

was not cold; They straitned themselves for their Brethren, they sold their possessions, and they had all things common: as ^{Act. 2.} they had one Faith, so they had one Purse ^{45.} _{4.34.} too; the Rich had nothing but the Poor had a share in, and they had all seasonable and sufficient supplies, and there was not any among them that lacked.

These are glorious and blessed effects, and which always follow (in some degree or other) where is perfect Unity, what makes men one; makes their joys, their sorrows, their interests one. *If one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it; if one suffer, all suffer with it:* ^{1 Cor. 12. 26.} and they are all a common care one to another.

Thus admirable and glorious is Unity, thus happy in its Charity; Both the subject of the Text, and both so useful, so beneficial, that what can we do, what can we desire better? And this is the Fourth thing,

IV. To pursue the Apostle's Exhortation, by laying down some considerations that may engage us to the love and practice of Unity and Charity. *BE ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; Be ye, i. e.* Let this be your Care, your Study, your Business; *Be ye so in your Judgments, in your Affections,*

in your Resolutions and in your Practices. And that we may be so, besides what hath been said already; We may consider,

1. That the practice of these Virtues recommends our Religion to the World; that is, it gives people occasion to respect it, and speak well of it, and the least of it is, that it gives them no just occasion to speak ill of it.

There are Two things with great earnestness objected against the Reformation; the Divisions among the Reformed, and their neglect of good Works.

As to the First of these, it is too notorious to be denied; and it is a great scandal and reproach to our Religion, and that which is commonly said in defence of it; That 'tis not in things necessary and fundamental, but only in less matters, makes it much worse: for if the occasion be little, and the Dissentions great, the more is the shame and infamy. Hence it is that our Religion is dishonoured, and the Reformation is accus'd, as if instability and inconsistency were in the fundamental Constitutions of it. And yet our Religion it self is very innocent in this matter. There are no fair, just, and Christian ways wanting to hold men in Unity: We do not indeed desire you to resign up your Judgments and Consciences, your reasons

reasons and enquiries to an Infallible Chair, which may perhaps produce a blind implicit Unity. But we do what Christian Religion directs by good Government, wholesome Discipline, Exhortations, Perswasions, and what (in like cases) the Apostles and Apostolical men have done before. There is a famous instance upon record. In the Church of *Corinth* were great Divisions, for the remedying of which *S. Paul* interposes himself, and after him *Clemens Romanus*; and by considering the courses they took (and surely their fence can never be better known than when they professedly discourse of these matters) We shall see whether they are more agreeable to the methods of the Church of *Rome*, or those of the Reformation. Those of the Church of *Rome* are, That there is an Universal visible Head, and all Christians are to be United under him; That the Church of *Rome* is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, and the Infallible Judge of Controversies, and that in all matters of Faith and Religion all men are to submit to Her decisions and determinations without examination or dispute: And This (we are told) is the true, the only, the necessary way of Union; and for want of it, or by deserting it, the Reformation has always been so full of Divisions, I cannot

now, nor is it very proper for me to examine the whole state of this matter ; all that I shall remark, is, that there is not one word of this, nor any thing like it, either in *S. Paul's Epistles*, or in *S. Clemens*, which is no small prejudice against it ; for 'tis very unreasonable to imagine, that when they were expressly treating of it, when with all earnestness and vehemency, they were perswading them to Unity, they should omit the chief, the only, the necessary means of it.

St. *Paul*, for the cure of their Divisions does not advise them to Unite under *S. Peter* as the Head of the Church ; but instead of that, he tells them (and 'tis very remarkable) that their divisions and contentions arose by saying they were of *S. Peter*, as well as of *Paul* or *Apollo*. I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollo*, and I of *Cephas* : and when they own'd *S. Peter* more particularly, and by vertue of that made a party and divided themselves from their Brethren, they were every jot as carnal, as when they did the same of the other Two. If therefore it had been their duty to adhere to *S. Peter* above all the rest, he would never have taxed them for it, and have reckoned it as one instance of their Contentions ; or however (having expressly mentioned *S. Peter*) if the uniting

uniting under him as an infallible Head, had been either necessary, or the best way to have settled their Divisions, when He wrote to them for that end, he would not, he reasonably could not have omitted it. But he makes use of a very differing method. He advises them to be Humble, not conceited of their own wisdom ; that their Dissentions are arguments of a carnal Mind ; that they should quietly observe their own Stations, and remember that they were members of Christ, and of one another : And such like, which are further prosecuted with a great deal of pious zeal and earnestness, by S. *Clemens*, in an Epistle to the same *Corinthians*, where he tells them, that their Divisions lost the Reputation they had gained by their former Vertue ; that they banished Justice and Peace, and introduced envy ; made them a scorn to their Enemies, and hazarded themselves ; had perverted many, made many despond and doubt, &c. That (for Remedy) they should be Humble ; that God hated Contentions, Malice, Revilings, and those that practised them, or consented to them ; that they should rather offend men than God ; that they should diligently search the Scriptures : That finally they should reverence them that were set over them, and return.

Cb. 1. 27.

2. 13.

3. 3.

7. 20.

12. 14.

&c.

Edir.

Patric.

Junii

Oxon.

1633.

P. 2, 5,

30, 46,

61, 73,

&c.

return to the obedience of their Bishops. These and such other are the means by which he indeavours to reduce the divided *Corinthians*, but not one word of an infallible visible Judge, and a Mistress of all Churches to which they should have recourse, and which should silence and quiet all their Debates, Disputes and Controversies. And 'tis somewhat remarkable, That this very man was not only a Saint and a Martyr, and an early Successor of the Apostles (mentioned by *S. Paul, Phil.4.3.*) but he was also a Bishop of *Rome*; one who knew very well the Rights of his own See, and was commanded to it by *S. Peter* himself. And yet when he interposes in the divisions of another Church, he does it with a great deal of Humility and Charity. He says not a word of his Authority to judge in their Controversies, much les claims the sole right to do it. But as he exhorts them to unite, from Christian arguments, so he advises them to submit not to him, but to their own Bishops and Pastors.

And these are plainly the same methods with those of the Reformation: And which indeed are effectual and sufficient enough to cure far greater Divisions, if they were but sincerely practised; but what are the best rules

Chron.
Allelti
Stad. per
Jun.

rules or persuasions, if they are not practised? And alas! 'tis easie to defend our Principles, would to God it were as easie to justifie our Practices. These defame and disparage the Reformation in spight of our best Proofs and Reasons. And if we would wipe off that foul stain, we must cease our Dissentions, and be as Good and Peaceable as our Principles. This will effectually answer all the clamors of our Adversaries, and do our Religion more right than all the Arguments of its Friends.

As to the other part of the Objection, the want of *good Works*, it is (thanks be to God) sufficiently confuted both by our Doctrines and our Practices. It hath already been observed and collected, that the visible Charities since the Reformation (for the time mentioned) have exceeded what hath been done in twice that time before it. And that for some parts of Charity, founding Schools, Hospitals, &c. more was done than from the Conquest to the Reformation. And, to the Honour of our Religion be it spoken, The publick and private Charities we daily see; the frequent Benefactions among us. And if to these I may have leave to add, the Generous purposes of this day, and others of the same nature; They are all illustrious Evidences, That the

*Willet Sy-
nopsis Pa-
pismi*
p. 1219.
1224. and
mentioned
by the Dean
of S. Pauls
*in his Epi-
tle to a
Spittle-
Sermon,*
1681.

Protestant

Protestant Religion is as Charitable as any. That though we do not believe our Works meritorious, or that they will commute for our Sins, or that our Money will redeem our Friends out of Torments after they are dead; yet we hold the obligation to them is indispensible, and which (so long as we continue true Protestants) we can no more omit, than any other necessary duty of Christian Religion.

2. The practice of These Vertues makes us like God ; I need not prove that to be like God is the utmost Perfection of Humane Nature. Every man that believes a God must believe it, and that it is impossible for a man to do better, than to imitate God. Now there is nothing more obvious and clear in the Divinity than these Two, God's Unity and his Goodness, That God is one, and that The one God is good, without these we can have no notion nor conception of God. For what is not Essentially one, cannot be God, and what is not good is the Devil. Now the Love and Practice of these Vertues before us are a faint imitation of the great things in the Divinity ; a Resemblance of those Adorable perfections in God ; I do not say that an aggregate Body is one as God is one ; for God is so Essentially, That by agreement ; But it resembles

semblies That his Unity, and the more men are united, the more they are like God. The Apostle in exhorting men to Unity, hath (among others) this Argument, That there is *One* God, (*i. e.*) that as the God they serve is but *One*, so they that serve him should be one likewise, and for that reason indeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace. And as God is *One*, so the *one* God is good; and 'tis happy for us that he is so: By this we were made, are preserved, fed and maintained. By this we are redeemed, pardoned, and at last saved. But then 'tis unreasonable and monstrous, not to love and exercise that our selves, which hath and constantly does so much good for us. Do we live by Charity, and shall we have none our selves? are we sav'd by mercy, and shall we afford none? is God's goodness the joy of our hearts, and the delight of the whole World, and shall we not our selves indeavour to get as much of it as we can? There are Two natures in the World, The one is good, merciful, compassionate, and apt to relieve, and This is the Divine Nature, the original of it is in God, it is God. And those who practise These things, are partakers of the Divine Nature, they resemble their Maker, and are fol-

Eph. 5. 1 lowers of God as dear Children. The other Nature is harsh, cruel, malicious, implacable, uncharitable, and this is the Devil's Nature, and the original of it is in himself, and they that do such things bear his Image, they follow their Father, and their deeds are evil. And sure there is no comparison; the one fills us with darkness and horror, sinks us below our selves, and of men makes Furies and Devils. The other raises us to Heaven, inspires us with immortal Spirits, and is a participation of God. There is not, there cannot be any thing in this world more glorious and honourable, than to have the nature of the Eternal God appear in the lives and actions of his Creatures. And when men from their hearts and Souls are loving and kind; when they pity the Poor, relieve the distressed, comfort and succor the helpless, and do all the good they are able: They have as much Divinity as humane Nature is capable of, and are a kind of God to their fellow-Creatures.

3. It is the state of Heaven. Unity and Charity are immortal Graces; they live at God's right hand, and are part of the imployment, and the happiness of the other World. And this sure (if any thing) will make

make them in request ; if Heaven will not invite us, nothing will. The Apostle gives the preference to Charity, before all other Christian Vertues, because it never fails. 'Tis here, and 'tis in Heaven, and 'tis infinitely better in Heaven than 'tis here. There is indeed no room for Advice, Forbearance, For-giveness, or Alms, because there is no Ignorance, Sin, Injury or Poverty ; but there are far higher and nobler acts of Charity : The most intense and ardent Love, infinite satisfaction and complacency in each other.

This is the business ; these are the joys of Heaven. And are they only there ? can men agree and love no where but in the other World ? Are Peace, Joy and Charity Blessings only above ? will they make Saints in Heaven, and are they not fit for Saints on Earth ? The Church indeed is here Militant ; but Envy, Strife, Wrath, Anger are no part of her military Vertues, but only the exercise of them, as they are to be opposed, subdued and conquered : She is of the same Society with the Church Triumphant, and her busi-ness is the same, Praise and Thanksgiving to God, and Peace and Unity with one another is the work of a *Seraphim* and of a good Man. The difference is, that 'tis perform'd

in Heaven without imperfection ; Holiness above is not another thing from Holiness below ; but it's infinitely better in Heaven. The Virtues are the same in kind, but they differ in degree. Those have an odd notion of Heaven, who take it to be only something without them, like the gifts and largeesses of this World ; whereas it is the exaltation of the things within them, the advancement of their Christian Graces. It consists in the most exact Holiness, the most unspotted Purity, the most infinite Love to God, and to one another.

And now will not the Beauty of these *Glories* win us ? will they not inspire our Souls with such heavenly dispositions ? We are all Travelling to the immortal residence of Unity and Charity ; we are earnestly labouring after the eternal possession of them. And is this possible, without an earnest love and practice of them ? can a man with all his Soul wish to enjoy Unity for ever, that does not now sincerely Love, Practise, and endeavour it ? can a man that hates his Brother ever think or desire to receive everlasting delight in his company ? A man cannot honestly wish for heaven, that does not care for the things in which it consists ; And these

Virtues

Virtues have been always thought so necessary to this state, that men are very loth to go out of the world without them, and when they come to dye, then they are for being in Charity with all the World; but if it be necessary for us to dye so, it is necessary for us to live so too; for we have but a poor Title to those Virtues which we never thought on but at our Death or Resurrection.

4. And Lastly, Give me leave to recommend these great Virtues to you, with respect to the particular occasion.

There is in all men, a great and natural propensity to their *Countrey*; what to the Air or Soil of it? These we may like indeed, but not love, they are too low and mean for this bright affection; 'tis our Living Countrey, the Rational and Christian part of it, that best deserves it, and suits with it. And whatever obligations we have to the exercise of these duties in other instances, We have here one more, our Nature, our Religion, and our Countrey too call upon us to Love one another, and to be Charitable; Love indeed is a spacious Virtue, not confin'd to a Town or a Countrey, nor shut up against any objects, but 'tis most delighted, soonest exercised at home. The Dew of *Her-
mon*.

mon that overflows to the inriching of distant Plains, its own Valley first receives the Virtue. When therefore it hath pleased God to touch mens hearts with dispositions of Piety and Charity, to do things for publick Ornament, Use or Alms; the seat they have chose for them, hath generally been, where they were Born or Bred: This is a kind of Tribute we owe to the place where we received our Breath. Grateful and good Men are apt to make Retributions where they receive the Benefit; there is no Blessing in the world like that of our Beings; the summ and foundation of all the rest: And when we are kind and beneficial to our Countreymen, we commemorate our own Nativities, and (in a manner) make an acknowledgment and thanksgiving to God for our Beings.

And as this is done in all instances of goodness, so especially in that before us. You are now exercising a peculiar Charity, and such as hath somewhat extraordinary in it. For if it be Piety and Charity, to feed and cloath the Hungry and Naked; what is it to set them up, to put them into such a condition and capacity as by God's Providence and their own industry, they may not only support themselves and Families, but be a relief unto others:

others: And (Thanks be to God) there want not instances of men, who from this beginning have become famous, useful and serviceable in their Generations. Those therefore that are now objects of your Charity may hereafter become Examples of it to others; however you plant the Tree, and by God's blessing it may grow up and flourish and bear fruit, and become a shelter to others. Charity is a good Soil, and what we begin in duty to God most, commonly ends with his Blessing.

And God grant that what ye now Sowe may bring forth such increase as may tend to the honour of God, the comfort of our Brethren, and the good of our Countrey,

I end with those excellent Prayers of our Church.

Quinquag. Sunday.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of peace and of all vertues, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this, for thy only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

22. Sunday after Trinity.

Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness, that through thy protection, it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in all good works; to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.
